



Disaster News

July 14, 2005

DR-1593-005

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STATE AND FEDERAL DISASTER WORKERS GO DOOR TO DOOR IN AFFECTED COMMUNITIES

CLANTON, AL – State and federal community relations teams are being deployed into Alabama’s disaster-declared counties to assist residents who suffered losses in Hurricane Dennis in their recovery efforts.

The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) and the Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will have 20 federal community relations specialists and their state counterparts working in the disaster neighborhoods beginning Saturday, July 16.

“These community relations specialists will bring the latest information on assistance programs directly to those who were adversely affected by the disaster, answer any questions they have and direct them to the best sources of help,” said Bruce Baughman, AEMA director.

The teams will be working in Escambia, Baldwin and Mobile counties, which became eligible for individual assistance when President Bush issued a major disaster declaration for 45 Alabama counties on July 10.

All 45 counties were declared eligible for public assistance, the program that reimburses state and local government agencies and certain nonprofit organizations for extraordinary overtime costs, debris removal and other infrastructure damage that is a direct result of the disaster.

Individual assistance assessments are continuing in other counties for their possible addition to the declaration.

James N. Russo, the official in charge of federal recovery operations, said the community relations effort would continue as long as needed. “It’s comforting to disaster victims to have direct contact with the people who are here to help them.”

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FEMA prepares the nation for all hazards and manages federal response and recovery efforts following an incident of national significance. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, trains first responders, works with state and local emergency managers and manages the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.